THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (c) No such complaints regarding sale of imported food stuffs after lapse of their expiry period date has come to the notice of the Department of Consumer Affairs. This subject comes within the purview of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act; 1954 and the Rules framed thereunder, administered by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Implementation of the said Act and Rules are entrusted with the Food (Health) Authorities of the States/UTs. They have been instructed to lift samples of imported food articles sold in the market and take action including prosecution of offenders in the cases where the samples are found to be adulterated/ misbranded or violating the labeling provisions of the said Act and Rules.

The Department of Commerce has also issued a Notification under section 5 of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 to the effect that all edible/food products, domestic sale and manufacture of which are governed by prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 shall also be subject to the condition that at the time of importation, the products are having a valid shelf life of not less than 60 % of their original shelf life. Accordingly all Port/Airport Health Officers and Custom Collectors at Ports/ Airports have been advised to ensure that all the imported food articles comply with all the above provisions before the same are released into the country for human consumption.

Price rise

4027. SHRI DEVDAS APTE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the prices of food commodities have not fallen down inspite of the new stock of the crops in the market;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that the Parliamentary Committee of the Ministry has held the hoarders responsible for the rising prices inspite of the new crops;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what are the other recommendations of the Committee and what steps Government are going to take on these recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) The level of prices of commodities is determined largely by a variety of factors operating on the demand and supply side. These include domestic production, arrivals in the market, quantity of imports, international prices, consumption requirements, expectation regarding behaviour of prices. etc. Therefore, arrival of new stock of crops in the market may not always result in a decline in prices. Retail prices of wheat have registered a decline at 3 centres in the country in the recent past out of 18 centres monitored by this Department. Similarly, retail prices of gram dal have registered a decline at 5 centres in the country.

(c) and (d) The 19th Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (2006-07) in Chapter 6 has, *inter alia*, observed that "in order to control the prices of foodgrains, the Government have issued a new Control Order on 29th August, 2006 to authorize the State Government to fix the stock limit in case of wheat and pulses and empower them to initiate action against the hoarding of the these commodities."

(e) The other recommendations are contained in the 19th Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (2006-07), which has been laid on the Table of the House on 27.4.07. As regards the steps taken by the Government on the recommendations, an Action Taken Report is being compiled and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Foodgrains stock in FCI godown

4028. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what was the stock of foodgrains in the godowns of the Food Corporation of India during the las three years, year-wise and till date;

(b) the total quantum of foodgrains released and lifted for export during that period, year-wise;

(c) whether foodgrains were released to the exporters at a subsidized rate;